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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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Siegfried Nyssen

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MILLEN, WHITE, ZELANO & BRANIGAN, P.C.
2200 CLARENDON BLVD.
SUITE 1400
ARLINGTON, VA 22201

EXAMINER

THEODORE, MAGALI P

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1791

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

12/18/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election with traverse of claims 8-21 in the reply filed on November 17, 2008 is acknowledged. Upon further consideration, the previous restriction requirement has been withdrawn and replaced by restriction requirement below.

2. Restriction is required under 35 U.S.C. 121 and 372.

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.499, applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single invention to which the claims must be restricted.

Group I, claim(s) 1-7, drawn to a method of making a plastic skin by powder sintering with a sintering tool that has a separating web and an inflatable sealing edge.

Group II, claim(s) 8-21, drawn to an apparatus for making a plastic skin by powder sintering with a sintering tool that has a separating web and an inflatable sealing edge.

Group III, claims 22-24, drawn to a plastic part comprising a plastic skin by powder sintering with a sintering tool that has a separating web and an inflatable sealing edge.

The inventions listed as Groups I-III do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: The technical feature which links the claims of Groups I and III is a sintering tool that has a separating web

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and an inflatable sealing edge. Whether or not any particular technical feature makes a contribution over the prior art and therefore constitutes a “special technical feature” is considered with respect to novelty and inventive step. (MPEP [R-6] 1850 II.) As evidenced by Atsumi et al. (JP 2000-108148), the separating web (figure 1, between 36 and 38) and the inflatable sealing edge (figure 3:42) are known in the art. Therefore, the claimed technical feature fails to define a contribution over the prior art and unity of invention is lacking between these two groups.

3. Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include (i) an election of a species or invention to be examined even though the requirement may be traversed (37 CFR 1.143) and (ii) identification of the claims encompassing the elected invention.

The election of an invention or species may be made with or without traverse. To preserve a right to petition, the election must be made with traverse. If the reply does not distinctly and specifically point out supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election shall be treated as an election without traverse.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Magali P. Théodore whose telephone number is (571) 270-3960. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Christina A. Johnson can be reached on (571) 272-1176. The fax phone

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number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Magali P. Théodore/

Examiner, Art Unit 1791

/Christina Johnson/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1791